

Perspectives

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**Community College
Leadership for the
21st Century**

Transformational leadership can offset or overcome the . . . limitations associated with organizational structure and resistance to change by anchoring the leadership to the academic values of the institution.

- Richard Savior

Transformational leadership [is] characterized by a desire of leaders to have followers achieve self-actualization and reach their fullest potential, an impetus that enables an organization to achieve at high or extraordinary levels.

- Johnny H. McMoy

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THE NEXT COHORT**

Leadership for Transformational Change

Cindy Miles, PhD

Chancellor
Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
El Cajon, California

America's community colleges have adaptation and change in our DNA. As the youngest upstarts of the higher education family, we cling to our self-concept as agile responders to the learning needs of our students and communities. Particularly at the student level, our colleges have extraordinary track records as agents of change. The learning we make possible expands our students' social and economic prospects. It transforms them psychologically, behaviorally, and even physically, modifying the basic anatomy of their brains. The deep changes and growth that students undergo during their time with us are the double helix of our community college genetic code and our inspiration for this work.

We revel in our thousands of student success stories, yet we're unsettled by the dark truths of how much we leave undone: the students we lose, those whom we fail to welcome, our communities' unmet workforce needs. The push for greater, deeper, more transformational change in community colleges grows from both our promise and our faults.

Lately we're struggling to reverse the nation's declines in educational attainment and to live up to our name as

The push for greater, deeper, more transformational change in community colleges grows from both our promise and our faults.

Democracy's Colleges by ensuring equitable opportunity and outcomes for all students. In this turbulent context, community college leaders are left to question how to play to our strengths and yet discern when big, bold change is in order.

Metamorphosis

Transformation literally means going beyond your form. -Wayne Dyer

Transformational change is profound and affects all aspects of an organization. It involves large-scale, over-arching alterations and is contrasted with the small-scale approach of incremental change, which aims at improving a discrete process or part of the organization. It is *revolutionary* rather than *evolutionary* in its focus on breaking and replacing, rather than improving the status quo. An organization looks to transformational change when its existing ways of thinking, being, and acting no longer work to meet its mission, vision, and values.

Elisa Robyn, PhD

Dean, College for Professional Studies
Regis University
Denver, Colorado

Transformational change is more like *metamorphosis* than adaptation. It carries with it some of the same features we studied in grade school about the mysterious changes of caterpillars to chrysalis to adult butterflies—*multiple stages* (egg, larva, pupa, adult), *radical structural alterations* (how the caterpillar digests itself and becomes liquid in the chrysalis before reforming its lovely new body and wings), and *challenge of adjusting to new states of being* (the labors of the emerging butterfly to exercise its flight muscles and dry its wings before being able to fly). Transformational change is messy, hard business.

Change at this level is referred to as *strategic* and requires that we decisively set about to see issues in a different light, that we shift our language and actions in deliberate, holistic, and comprehensive ways. Often, as we implement program or process improvements, we imagine we are transforming our colleges. We might upgrade CTE programs, revise the academic calendar, or build a "one stop" center. But, unless these initiatives are part of a comprehensive set of strategic changes that are *collectively embraced* and *broadly integrated*, such that the majority of our employees and students act in new ways to achieve vital outcomes, we have only adapted, and we are not truly transformed.

Leading by questioning

People don't resist change. They resist being changed. -Peter Senge

Organizations have a particular disaffection for leaders who rock the status quo. Perhaps this is because leaders seeing a need for change often start with the wrong questions. Too often they appear with the latest, greatest project or shiny innovation and ask: *How can we get buy-in for this fabulous idea?*

We recommend starting with a much more basic set of questions:

- ▲ *What is the scope and nature of the problem we are trying to solve?*
 - ▲ *Does this impact student learning and success?*
 - ▲ *What do we need to change in the way we think and act?*
- Applying such questions in the midst of organizational frenzy can help leaders avoid being jolted into knee-jerk changes, especially when facing multiple or boisterous demands. Suppose the state suddenly requires a massive new reporting process, and we don't have the data infrastructure in place to respond. Additionally, we suddenly

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EMERGING LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES

Transformational leadership has been described as empowering for both leaders and followers in establishing a positive institutional culture within the community college. Transformational leaders can enhance the motivation, morale, and performance of followers by connecting the follower's sense of identity to the college mission; by serving as an inspirational role model and challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work; and by helping to align followers with tasks that optimize their performance. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders; their answers appear below:

Moaty Fayek, MS

Dean of Business, Computer Science
and Applied Technologies
De Anza College, Cupertino, California

Community colleges across the nation are faced with many challenges. The latest economic downturn brought with it not only significant budget cuts, but also more calls to revisit how colleges are managed. Many state legislators responded with more mandates and propositions that did not necessarily come with additional resources. Community colleges are expected to solve the problems of unprepared high school graduates by investing in remedial education and complying with all state and federal mandates. Furthermore, community colleges are charged with preparing graduates for transfer to four-year institutions, while also providing their constituencies with a skilled workforce. Therefore, it is critical to retain leaders with the necessary skills to combat these challenges.

The time of the figurehead leaderships who can talk the talk but cannot walk the walk has long passed. For that, we now have public relation officers. Colleges are in desperate need of leaders who will roll-up their sleeves and rally the troops to move forward on a successful path with a common vision. With their charisma, strong work ethic, and trustworthy nature, transformational leaders are the obvious choice to head our community colleges.

Transformational leaders have the vision to turn institutions around by reshaping and reinventing colleges' ways of doing business. Through goal-orientation, inspiration, and social intelligence, transformational leaders have the natural talent to motivate, inspire, and bring everyone aboard. Transformational leaders are innovative; they can look at a problem and either solve it or turn it into an opportunity. Most importantly, with their strong skills for building dedicated teams, transformational leaders typically do not wait for a problem to happen. Instead, they are always thinking of the next best thing.

Institutions are failing as a result of leaders who lack vision and are afraid of taking risks. Such leaders worry more about their public image or having to justify their actions to their board of trustees than what is best for their institutions. We need forward-thinking leaders who are trustworthy, creative, innovative, and goal oriented; leaders who know how to think out of the box, show empathy, and provide role models for their followers; leaders who inspire change and allow every individual to reach his or her ultimate capacity based on a strong belief that we are all in it together; and, most critically, leaders who are the first to assume responsibility. At times when morale is down and colleges are facing pressing challenges, community colleges need transformational leaders who can meet these needs and more.

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~ Moaty Fayek, MS

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

How can transformational leadership help to impact the resolution of critical issues faced by today's community college leaders?

Seleana Samuel, MA

Purchasing Director
Lansing Community College
Lansing, Michigan

Several critical issues are facing post-secondary education providers. Challenges include decreasing enrollment numbers, performance funding, college readiness, student access, guided pathways, education quality, and completion. Arguably, these issues are complex and impact each area within a community college. Approaching them is a daunting task for

even the most seasoned executive. To further complicate the matter, current strategies for resolving these issues are new and very little data exist to support their effectiveness. A cookie-cutter solution does not exist. Practices and methodologies used to address these issues in an urban environment may differ greatly in rural and suburban areas. To this end, it is safe to say that community college leaders of today must possess incredible intuition and foresight. Positive results can be achieved by way of strong leadership, regardless of leadership style. Nevertheless, characteristics often associated with transformational leaders allow people operating within this leadership style to thrive in the present environment.

Transformational leaders can be found at all levels within an organization. According to Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory, there are four components associated with how these individuals lead. Components include intellectual stimulation (challenge status quo and embrace creativity), individualized consideration (employee support and value recognition), inspirational motivation (passionate communication of organizational vision which yields employee support), and idealized influence (attainment of employee trust and respect). Given this understanding, embracing a transformational leadership style can help poise any leader to help resolve critical issues within the community college by:

- ▲ Communicating a clear vision for the future others can support;
- ▲ Establishing a strategic plan and prioritization structure through stakeholder involvement and input;
- ▲ Creating a culture of teamwork, delegating ownership to employees;
- ▲ Supporting individual creativity and innovation in the organization.

How is this possible? Transformational leaders take a relationship-focused approach which has the power to positively impact organizational culture and yield a lasting change. The style breeds employee empowerment, idea generation, and positive systemic changes. Instead of waiting for others to lead the way through best practices, these individuals set up their own pathways to innovation. This is extremely helpful in the current environment where community college issues are receiving international attention and there is a sense of urgency for operational changes and performance measurement. If you want to identify transformational leaders within your institution, look for the individuals that have a knack for building trust, motivating employees, encouraging creativity and consistently developing strategies to help the college progress in a positive direction.

Moaty Fayek is Dean of Business, Computer Science and Applied Technologies at De Anza College, California. Moaty previously served as Professor, Chairman, and Graduate Advisor at California State University, Chico, as well as an entrepreneur and business owner with a passion for education and strong ties to the high-tech industry. He earned his MS in Computer Science from CSU, Chico, and is currently enrolled in the Ferris State University DCCL program.



Seleana Samuel serves as Purchasing Director for Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan, where she directs all centralized purchasing activities. Although relatively new to the community college world, Seleana has a passion for public service, continuous learning, and the development of others. She earned her MA from Spring Arbor University and is nationally certified as a Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO). She is currently pursuing her doctorate in the Ferris State University DCCL program.



NATIONAL LEADER PERSPECTIVE

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Transformative Leadership Values Collaboration to Meet New Community College Agenda

Andrew Pegman, MA

District Director, Leadership, Enrichment and Development and Assistant Professor of English Cuyahoga Community College Cleveland, Ohio

Transformational community college leaders must align the traditional mission of access with the emerging mission of student success and completion, and they cannot do it alone. Meeting the needs of students in this new reality must involve the entire college and community.

Access to education has been the fundamental guiding purpose of community colleges for nearly a century, but that mission is evolving. O'Banion (2013) states, "For almost 100 years, the community college has championed the Access Agenda—opening the door to higher education for students who never dreamed of going to college. And community colleges have been enormously successful in achieving the goals of the Access Agenda" (p.1).

Indeed, the Access Agenda has been incredibly successful. It "is the primary hallmark of the community college and will stand as its finest achievement in its first 100 years" (O'Banion, 2013, p.1). While access remains a noble mission, the mission of the community college is evolving, while leaders are transforming their institutions to reflect a new model of student success and completion.

With the challenges that face current and future leaders, it is important to consider the steps they must take when it comes to transforming institutions.

Student success is a term that is central to current community college discourse, yet it remains difficult to define. There are many successes on the road to completion, and leaders have debated whether student success is reflective of the journey or the destination. There is less ambiguity regarding completion. In fact, the Completion Agenda—born of an increasingly competitive global marketplace and driven by polical and economic demands—will require the most significant transformation that community college leaders face in the years ahead. As budget models and expectations evolve, community college leaders will be held accountable for completion data. This already determines their funding in some states, including Ohio. The model and mission of the community college must evolve to meet the needs of learners and economic realities.

With the challenges that face current and future leaders, it is important to consider the steps they must take when it comes to transforming institutions. According to Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989): "Community college leaders who are most successful are those who are committed to actions necessary to bring about appropriate change. They understand that changing the institution necessitates a process of changing people by influencing their values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Transforming leaders accept that change produces resistance and recognize that commitment for long-term results will not be accomplished through demands for new processes and methods." (p. 11)

At Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) in Cleveland, Ohio, President Alex Johnson not only established clear priorities aligned with the completion agenda, but also involved the entire institution in the achievement of those goals.

He expanded the President's Council, a body comprised of administrative and faculty leadership that deliberates on tested initiatives that can be scaled across the four campuses of the college. Pathways have opened for faculty to undertake key administrative positions, further strengthening ties and providing new perspectives. Success Teams on each campus implement, monitor, and evaluate these various initiatives, which include the mandatory First Year Experience that has resulted in impressive gains in student performance and retention. The Board of Trustees is an important ally with the president in establishing policies that promote the Completion Agenda.

Throughout the work, data has been used to establish targets and depict outcomes in such areas as retention and graduation rates, pass rates in mathematics and English, and graduation numbers. And as progress is experienced, the president has continually updated the college community, employers, public officials, and economic development leaders to develop and maintain collaboration.

As community college leaders develop new strategies and redefine student success, it is important that they never forget the mission of access on which the community college was built. Students must remain the focus of community colleges, and leaders must listen to and understand their needs and challenges. According to O'Banion (2013), "If we do not create the systems that will ensure the success of our students, the community college we know today may cease to exist, and the community college we dream of for the future may never come to be" (p. 3). However, with hard work and careful strategic planning, community college students and leaders can anticipate a bright future of transformation and success.

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Andrew Pegman is the District Director, Leadership, Enrichment and Development and a tenured Assistant Professor of English at Cuyahoga Community College. Pegman received the Excellence in Teaching Award in Honor of Ralph M. Besse for full-time faculty, recognition in Ohio Magazine's "Excellence in Education" feature, and the John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Award. He earned his MS from Cleveland State University and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Community College Leadership.

QUICK TAKES
Highlights
from the Field

Transformational Leadership: How Do We Get There?

By Rhonda Pennings

The author discusses the theory that the commitment of the leader to make a change or produce transformation in an organization or system essentially is considered the heart of transformational leadership. Based upon the prevailing literature of transformational leadership, the author explores the characteristics of transformational leadership and provides practical suggestions focused on various methods to transform leadership skills. Highlighted are the top five characteristics of transformational leadership that emerged from the research. Read the full article here:

<http://bit.ly/1HIk8KM>

Leadership Theory and the Community College: Transformational Leadership

by Carlos Nevarez, J. Luke Wood, and Rose Penrose

Key characteristics of transformational leaders are reviewed in this chapter which serves as one component of the larger work on leadership in general. The authors posit that transformational leaders guide institutional affiliates with a sense of care, support, and true commitment to the self-actualization of those affiliates in order to accomplish the institutional mission. To achieve this goal, leaders utilize an array of skills, roles, and behaviors to influence institutional affiliates. Read the full article here:

<http://bit.ly/1O49RNI>

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danielcampbell@ferris.edu



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Leadership for Transformational Change (continued from page 1)

have one term to reformat all our online courses to address Title IX and ADA needs. And, all this is happening in the midst of a major staff turnover and budget dive. Shaping resolutions to this cluster of troubles calls for sophisticated leadership finesse, but does not cry out for transformational change.

Sneakier problems are generally more apt targets for

Transformational change is hard work that often starts with soft actions that nudge the culture into a different set of beliefs and rituals.

comprehensive organizational change solutions. Possibly we gradually discern that our entire instructional approach has grown stale, or that our courses and calendar are designed for a student demographic that no longer is with us. Perhaps we come to recognize that our college is structured by funding sources and organizational convenience. Maybe a rising curiosity about how our colleges might become more student ready is beginning to overtake the habitual blaming of students for not being college ready.

As a leader, it is our job to guide reflection on change options before scurrying to action. When pressure for action mounts, we can improve our decision-making by practicing mindful questioning: *How do we know this is the right change or set of changes? Will this work across the entire institution? Have we explored perspectives from all our stakeholders, including students? Is this a change of significant magnitude to make a sufficient and lasting difference?*

After finding ample collective comfort with responses to these queries, we can undertake a comprehensive implementation plan. More questions guide this development: *What do we need to implement this change? What resources? Which people? How will we know we are making progress?* This is the time to sit with our teams and craft the precise steps to take. This is the time to design the change strategy, name formal and informal leaders, identify incentives to garner engagement and support, outline a communication plan to establish both the need and vision for change, map out milestone and outcome goals, and lay out a monitoring and assessment system. Sustainable organizational transformation requires modifications at multiple levels, so we need to consider *policy changes, behavioral changes, and cultural changes* needed throughout the initiative.

Ultimately, transformational change is regulated by an organization's culture—the underlying beliefs (*what is valued*) and assumptions (*how things work around here*). To be successful, we must understand what is true about our institution's culture that will either support or inhibit a change initiative, and work with or around these realities. Approaching change of transformational magnitude is not for the faint of heart, as this can mean fundamentally re-forming who we are and how we approach all our roles, activities, beliefs, and even cultural norms.

Before the change

Some of the most important questions to ask when approaching transformational change are based in self-reflection. Personal reflection is a vital pre-step to determine if we are leading change for the right reasons.

Sometimes without realizing it, leaders may be motivated to drive organizational changes to establish a legacy or implement a personal dream. Leaders must be brutally honest with themselves to avoid falling into one of the common **change traps**:

- ▲ Have you caught **Gold Rush Fever**, rushing with the stampede toward the promised land of revenue generators? Are you charmed by lucrative tales of international recruitments, public/private partnerships for residency halls, or crowdsourcing?
- ▲ Is it possible you're suffering from **Innovation Renovation**, creating change for the sake of change and mistaking it for creativity? Do MOOCs, business incubators, big data, or knowledge analytics sing the siren song in your ear?
- ▲ Have you got a case of **Affinity Proclivity**, seeing the world through the lens of your favorite field of study? Does your artistic aptitude draw you to design solutions? Does your accounting background make ROI your perpetual bottom line?

Transformational change resonates with the core of the community college vision, though only when applied to its highest purpose of improving student learning and success. Change for any other reason risks feeding our egos and violating our mission.

Beyond current form

Any organizational change can be difficult, but not all changes are transformational. The needs of our students must be the source of power that fuels systemic changes beyond our current forms. Transformational change is hard work that often starts with soft actions that nudge the culture into a different set of beliefs and rituals. As leaders we must embrace and demonstrate the healthy traits of change that we expect from our colleges and our employees, including resiliency, flexibility, adaptability, self-reflection, and risk-taking. Perhaps this is the greatest gift of transformational change: we can lead by example so that our entire institution is teaching all our students to grow beyond their current forms to learn and spread their wings and transform their lives.



Cindy L. Miles, PhD, is chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, a two-college district with almost 30,000 students in eastern San Diego County, California. She previously served community colleges as a faculty member, administrator, and founding campus president for rural and urban institutions in five states, as well as for the League for Innovation in the Community College. Miles received an MS in higher education from Texas A&M University and her PhD in educational administration from The University of Texas at Austin.



Elisa Robyn, PhD, is Dean, College for Professional Studies at Regis University, Denver, Colorado. Prior to joining Regis, she served as Dean of Arts and Sciences at the Community College of Denver and as Academic Vice President at Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design. She holds a PhD in Educational Psychology and two Masters Degrees. She has over 20 years of higher education experience, with a research focus on innovation and leadership. Her publications include "Pirate Wisdom" and "The way of the Well."